

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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SUBJECT: US-HUNGARIAN RELATIONS ON POST-SUPPORTED PROGRAM BY
HUNGARIAN TELEVISION

1. SUNDAY EVENING PRIME-TIME POLITICAL TV SERIES "A HET"
OPENED ITS APRIL 24 PROGRAM WITH 12 MINUTE SEGMENT ON
US-HUNGARIAN RELATIONS, BASED ON INTERVIEWS FILMED ON
RECENT US VISIT BY DENES POLGAR. PROGRAM CONSISTED OF
INTERVIEWS WITH SENATOR SPARKMAN, CONGRESSMEN VANIK AND
BINGHAM AND DEPT COUNSELOR MATTHEW NIMETZ. THIS WAS THE
FIRST TIME HUNGARIAN TELEVISION HAS EVER DONE A REPORT
SPECIFICALLY ON US-HUNGARIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS. THE
PROGRAM, SEEN BY AN ESTIMATED 4.5 MILLION VIEWERS, THE
AVERAGE AUDIENCE OF "A HET" ON SUNDAY EVENINGS, WAS
UNIFORMLY UP-BEAT AND POSITIVE THROUGHOUT.

2. OPENING COMMENTS BY POLGAR WERE THAT WITH NEW US
ADMINISTRATION IN OFFICE THERE WAS GREAT INTEREST IN THE
FUTURE OF DETENTE, ON WHICH IN TURN US-HUNGARIAN
RELATIONS DEPENDED VERY HEAVILY. QUESTIONS WOULD
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THEREFORE FOCUS ON PROSPECTS FOR DETENTE, FOR BELGRADE
CONFERENCE AND BILATERAL RELATIONS.

3. SENATOR SPARKMAN SAID HE HAD VISITED HUNGARY IN
THE PAST AND HAD A VERY GOOD IMPRESSION OF THE
DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS IT HAD ACHIEVED. HE SAID HE DID
NOT KNOW WHAT USG PLANS WERE FOR MFN FOR HUNGARY, BUT

HE THOUGHT THAT IN VIEW OF OUR FRIENDLY RELATIONS THERE CANNOT BE ANY BIG OBSTACLES IN ITS WAY. REGARDING BELGRADE THE SENATOR SAID HE WAS HAPPY TO KNOW THAT PRESIDENT CARTER IN HIS UN SPEECH STATED THAT US ATTRIBUTES EQUAL IMPORTANCE TO IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL THREE BASKETS OF HELSINKI AGREEMENTS.

4. CONGRESSMAN VANIK SAID THAT PROSPECTS WERE GOOD FOR EXPANSION OF TRADE. HE SAID US VERY MUCH AWARE AND APPRECIATES FACT THAT HUNGARY TAKES VERY SERIOUSLY PLEDGES MADE IN HELSINKI. IN THE MOST UPBEAT OF THE FOUR STATEMENTS HEARD, VANIK SAID QUOTE PROSPECTS ARE EXCELLENT TO WIDEN RELATIONS AND REGARDING MFN, MY COMMITTEE WILL APPROVE IT. PROSPECTS ARE GOOD FOR ELIMINATING THIS DISCRIMINATION UNQUOTE. HE SAID IT WAS TIME TO EXAMINE WAYS IN WHICH HUNGARY COULD QUALIFY UNDER TRADE ACT. STATING THAT HUNGARY HAD DONE WELL ECONOMICALLY TOO, HE CONCLUDED THAT QUOTE A BROADER AND FULL TRADE RELATIONSHIP UNQUOTE WAS DESIRABLE.

5. CONGRESSMAN BINGHAM WAS ASKED AND COMMENTED MOSTLY ABOUT FOREIGN ANXIETY RE POSSIBLE NEW US PROTECTIONISM. HE EXPLAINED THAT PENDULUM ALWAYS SWINGS BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN FREE TRADE AND PROTECTIONIST TENDENCIES, BUT IN LONG-TERM FOREIGN TRADE HAS TO BE DEVELOPED AND EXPANDED. ON MFN BINGHAM SAID QUOTE MFN CANNOT BE A PROBLEM, I BELIEVE CONGRESS WILL FIND WAY TO GRANT MFN TO HUNGARY JUST LIKE IT DID FOR POLAND UNQUOTE. CONGRESSMAN BINGHAM UNCLASSIFIED

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ALSO SAID HE WAS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT DETENTE AND HOPEFUL OF DEVELOPING FURTHER TRADE WITH HUNGARY. HE SAID THAT IN ARMS LIMITATIONS BOTH SIDES HAVE GREAT DEAL AT STAKE AND THEY CAN AND MUST SUCCEED.

6. DEPT COUNSELOR EXPRESSED BELIEF DETENTE WILL CONTINUE AND THAT USG AS WELL AS AMERICAN PEOPLE LOOK FORWARD TO BELGRADE BECAUSE HELSINKI AGREEMENTS WERE VERY IMPORTANT EVENT IN RECENT HISTORY. HE SAID PRESIDENT HAD STATED IMPORTANCE OF ALL THESE BASKETS AND BELGRADE SHOULD BE USEFUL TO EVALUATE RESULTS SO FAR AND LEAD TO GREATER IMPLEMENTATION. IT SHOULD DISCUSS THIS VERY IMPORTANT QUESTION IN CONSTRUCTIVE MANNER.

7. ON BILATERAL RELATIONS COUNSELOR SAID QUOTE OUR RELATIONS ARE GOOD; OF COURSE THEY CAN ALWAYS BE BETTER - THIS IS WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE IN NEXT FEW YEARS UNQUOTE. HE REFERRED TO CONSULAR AND CULTURAL/SCIENTIFIC AGREEMENTS, DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE, COOPERATIVE AND

JOINT VENTURES AS EVIDENCE OF IMPORTANT PROGRESS. HE SAID QUOTE THERE IS GENUINE FEELING THAT WE HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE HUNGARIAN PEOPLE UNQUOTE.

8. ON MFN COUNSELOR SAID NEW ADMINISTRATION HAD ONLY BEEN IN OFFICE TWO MONTHS AND IS STILL IN PROCESS OF EXAMINING MFN ISSUE, ALONG WITH MANY OTHERS. HE EXPRESSED HOPE PROBLEM CAN BE SOLVED.

9. AFTER INTERVIEWS "A HET" COMMENTATOR JANOS HORVAT SAID QUOTE THE POSITIVE ELEMENTS IN THESE INTERVIEWS COINCIDE FULLY WITH OFFICIAL HUNGARIAN POSITIONS UNQUOTE. HE REMARKED THAT ON MKE CONGRESSMEN WERE QUOTE POSITIVE BUT STATE DEPT MORE CAUTIOUS. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, HE CONCLUDED, HOW WORDS WILL BE CONVERTED TO DEEDS.

10. COMMENT: POLGAR TOLD PAO THAT CONGRESSMAN VANIK HAD UNCLASSIFIED

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ALSO REPEATED IN INTERVIEW REMARKS ON CROWN MADE IN RECENT NYT INTERVIEW, BUT THIS WAS OMITTED FROM PROGRAM IN ORDER NOT TO AROUSE POSSIBLY FALSE EXPECTATIONS.

11. PROGRAM WAS ANOTHER IN SERIES OF SUCCESSFUL CO-OPERATIVE EFFORTS BETWEEN POST AND HUNGARIAN TELEVISION. OVER PAST TWO YEARS POST INFORMATION PROGRAM HAS FOCUSED MUCH ATTENTION ON PRESENTING ACCURATE AND BALANCED PICTURE OF US FOREIGN AND ECONOMIC POLICY AS WELL AS US SOCIETY VIA WORK WITH KEY CONTACTS AT HUNGARIAN TELEVISION. RESULT IN PAST EIGHTEEN MONTHS HAVE BEEN FIFTEEN PROGRAMS SHOWN ON TELEVISION, MOSTLY TO PRIME-TIME AUDIENCES.

12. PROGRAMS HAVE INCLUDED COVERAGE OF BOTH POLITICAL CONVENTIONS, ELECTION NIGHT, AN EXCELLENT REPORT ON HUNGARIAN-AMERICANS, A SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY SERIES FILMED IN US FOR HUNGARIAN "UNIVERSITY OF THE AIR," APOLLO-SOYUZ COVERAGE FROM HOUSTON, SEVEN PROGRAMS IN THE HELTAI-TV COOP PROJECT, REGULAR NEWS REPORTS BY WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT ANDRAS HELTAI, AND COOPERATION WITH HUNGARIAN TELEVISION'S EAST-WEST DEBATE SHOWS. END COMMENT. MUDD

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